

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

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SUBJECT Training of Specialized
Warfare Battalion

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1. Location

The Battalion for Specialized Warfare (Prapor Zvláštních Bojových Prostředků - ZBP), formation number 2276, is stationed at the "Terezianské kasárny" at Olomouc. The post office box is #4, Olomouc 1.

2. Establishment, Status, Selection of Trainees

- a. The battalion was established in the fall of 1947, and training was started on 1 October 1947. It constitutes an independent unit which forms no part of the normal organization of the Czechoslovak Army and is under the direct control of the Ministry of National Defense.
- b. Prospective trainees : with special qualifications are selected from infantry units and from units of the Engineers Corps and include the following: students of chemistry, chemical engineers, chemists, and laboratory students and workers. They are subjected to physical fitness tests, including examination of their sense of smell, taste, and sight. Great assistance in their selection is given by district recruiting centers ("okresní doplnovací velitelství"), where recruits are screened for appropriate educational and professional qualifications.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this unit is to train specialized instructors who are later attached to various formations with the task of training platoons. According to recent instructions, only the most reliable persons (from a political point of view) may be selected, since they are being initiated into the newest and most secret methods of warfare.

4. Organization of the Battalion

a. Officers

Battalion Commander: Lt. Colonel Josef Jurník*
Deputy Battalion Commander: Staff Captain František Procházka*

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Enlightenment Officer: Staff Captain Kroupa
 Deputy Enlightenment Officer: Lt. Zdenek Sitar
 Medical Officer: Ludvik Ostrcilik, Reserve Lt., serving on contract
 Company Commanders: Captains
 Platoon Commanders: 1st and 2nd Lieutenants

b. Company Organization and Strength

- 1) 1st Company - recruits born 1926; 9 officers, 2 senior NCO's, 89 EM.
- 2) 2nd Company - recruits born 1926; 2 officers, 2 senior NCO's, 71 EM.
- 3) 3rd Company - recruits born 1926; 3 officers, 2 senior NCO's, 73 EM.
- 4) 4th Company - recruits born 1925; 3 officers, 2 senior NCO's, 92 EM.
- 5) Armory - 20 EM.

c. Platoon Organization and Strength

Each company consists of three platoons. Each platoon has a strength of approximately 25, consisting of the following:

- 1) 1 flame thrower
- 2) 3 feeders of smoke (gas) bombs
- 3) 3 sprayers
- 4) Machine gunners, who have the task of supporting and protecting the above team of specialists.

5. Training

- a. Basic training consists of infantry training, during the latter part of which respirators are worn.
- b. The recruits are given special training to sharpen their sense of smell and enable them to distinguish various kinds of poison gas. Graduates are required to recognize at least 10 different kinds of poison gas by smell.
- c. In addition, the following exercises are carried out: laying of smoke screens, flame throwing, exercises with tear-gas bombs and with flares ("svetelna teliska"), etc. The course also includes meteorological training.

6. Equipment

Equipment used is mostly of Russian origin, but German, English, Italian, and Hungarian equipment is also available. The flame-throwers are of a new type with an extended nozzle manufactured in Czechoslovakia; at a recent trial only 40 percent proved serviceable. Iperite was used at the last maneuvers.

7. Mediums Used in Chemical Warfare

- a. Blinding bombs which have a temporary blinding effect by stimulating tears are used against tank crews.
- b. Toxins are used for the polluting of water. Their principal value lies in the poisoning of wells, springs, water tanks, and puddles during retreat.

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- c. Anthrax in a sulphur solution is used for spraying. It causes decomposition of the blood.
- d. It is emphasized in the training that, in addition to people, foodstuffs and animals also must be poisoned. It is also emphasized that in a future war bacteriological warfare will also be resorted to, in which case bacteriological poisons (e.g. viruses) will be used.
- e. Two similar kinds of poison gas, "cyclones", both of German make, have been used.
- f. Practical exercises have been carried out with the above-mentioned chemicals, toxics, and poison gases.

8. Addition of Training Battalion

Effective 1 March 1949 the Battalion is being joined by a "Training Battalion" ("Vycvikovy Prapor ZBP - VZVPB"). In connection with this move, armament and vehicles (without number plates) are arriving daily. It is impossible to tell how much equipment the Battalion now has available.

9. Political Division within the Battalion

Of the 1925 recruits, about 95 percent are organized members of the KSC (Czech Communist Party), but about 80 percent of these are considered to have Western leanings. Of the 1926 recruits, only about 30 percent are members of the KSC and about 80 percent of these are Western-minded.

25X1A * [REDACTED] Comment: One informant reports that the Battalion Commander holds the rank of major and that the Deputy Battalion Commander is Staff Capt. Chochola (member of the KSC).

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